

Partners in Preparedness



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
health.maryland.gov

Hello everyone! Welcome to the latest issue of **Partners in Preparedness**, a quarterly newsletter to highlight all of the programs, activities and campaigns that are going on inside the **Maryland Department of Health Office of Preparedness and Response (OP&R)** along with updates from our amazing partners across the great state of Maryland. There is no part of the state's COVID-19 response that hasn't been touched by OP&R and our partners. Thanks again for all that you do to keep Marylanders safe and healthy all year long!

OP&R REACHES THE ONE YEAR MARK OF THEIR COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE

The **Office of Preparedness and Response** hit a big milestone on **January 18th, 2021** as that day marked exactly one year since the start of their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since that day, OP&R has been in full emergency response mode, helping to manage all aspects of the state's COVID-19 response including daily planning and coordination of the **Maryland COVID-19 Vaccination Plan**.

Reaching the one anniversary is by no means a reason to celebrate, as thousands of Maryland lives have been lost during that time, but OP&R is very proud of its resilience and contributions during the past year. Here are some thoughts from members of the staff as they reflect on what it means to reach the one year mark of OP&R's COVID-19 response.

Sherry Adams, Director of OP&R: *"The entire team here at OP&R has made considerable contributions to the mission to stop COVID-19 in Maryland. We have made it through some really tough times over the past year, and still have a ways to go, but I am so proud of what we have done. Everyone here has sacrificed so much and given up so much time with their families for the sake of the mission."*

Veronica Black, Deputy Director of OP&R: *"This has been one tough year! However, our team has demonstrated a level of resiliency that is truly commendable. We continue to stand Maryland Strong, Maryland Ready to Respond!"*

Nicole S. Brown, Healthcare Preparedness Program Manager: *"It's been a long year and I have learned so much along the way. Most importantly, I have learned that with teamwork, any task can be accomplished!"*

Bernadette Eichman, Healthcare Preparedness Program Planner: *"Reaching the one year mark of responding to COVID-19 calls for a moment of reflection on how far we've come. From the knowledge, skills and lessons learned to the partnerships enriched; this response has demonstrated the dedication of colleagues and partners to help Marylanders."*

Peter Fotang, Epidemiologist, Biosurveillance Program: *"While it was always known that OP&R is one of the most important arms in the state's readiness to respond, this pandemic has reinforced that. Our office has risen to the occasion at every turn, with all staff supporting each other from the very start ."*

Dr. Al Romanosky, Medical Director at OP&R: *"As the great Robert Frost once said, 'In three words, I can sum up everything I've learned about life: IT GOES ON.' And that's exactly the way we've tackled the pandemic here at OP&R. We've manned up and kept it moving!"*



MarylandResponds/OPR @MarylandOPR · Mar 5

Happy #EmployeeAppreciationDay to everyone at the Office of Preparedness & Response and MD Responds! Thanks for all that you do to keep Marylanders safe and healthy, especially over the past year.



OP&R PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Here's a quick look at some of the activities and campaigns from the various programs that are administered by the Office of Preparedness and Response

MARYLAND RESPONDS MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS

The **Maryland Responds Medical Reserve Corps** team had an eventful first quarter of 2021 as they continued to deploy **Maryland Responds** volunteers across the state to assist with vaccination efforts. As of today, **23,709 volunteers** have signed up for MD Responds with that number growing every day. Over the past few months, many volunteers took a **Point of Dispensing (POD)** vaccination refresher training course, hosted by the staff of MD Responds and OP&R. This optional training was encouraged to make sure volunteers were up to speed with everything they need to know for a successful deployment.

Throughout this mission, many **MD Responders** have proudly posted pictures on their social media feeds of their work at vaccination sites around the state. Thanks again for your sacrifice and commitment to keeping

Marylanders healthy and safe, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are some great posts from some of our amazing volunteers:



MarylandResponds/OPR ✓ @MarylandOPR · Feb 27

Thanks to all the MD Responds members who volunteered their time, especially on a weekend, to help vaccinate Marylanders. [#GoVAXMaryland](#)



Connie Hwang @hwangc01 · Feb 27

So glad to vaccinate county residents as a volunteer w/ Maryland Responds Medical Reserve Corps yesterday. Demand still outpaces COVID-19 vaccine supply & county ops seem prepared for more. >1000 individuals successfully vaccinated at this one high school location in just 7 hrs.



Maryland Department of Health - Maryland Responds Medical Reserves Corps ✓

Published by Dave McCallister · February 3 ·

Thanks to all of our MD Responds volunteers, whether you're jabbing arms or a keyboard, who are helping with COVID-19 vaccination efforts across the state! [#GoVAXMaryland](#)



TWITTER.COM

Stephen Northrup on Twitter

"Spent this morning volunteering at a MoCo COVID vaccination clinic. I was jabbing a keyboard, not people.... The real heroes are people like Carol and Susan, two retired public health nurses who answered the call to staff clinics across the county. To volunteer: @MarylandOPR"



Molly K. McCarthy 🧡
@MSFTMollyRN



Grateful to serve my community! @MarylandOPR
#nurseswhovax



NHS @GtownNHS · Feb 27

BSN alumna Molly McCarthy (NHS'94) volunteered, with Maryland Medical Reserve Corps, to administer the COVID-19 vaccine at Quince Orchard High School. McCarthy, the CNO @Microsoft, says it was "a privilege to help." The @HoyasWSoc alumna proudly wears her Georgetown Soccer shirt.



12:35 PM · Feb 27, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

Maryland Responds also began an exciting new partnership with the **University System of Maryland** to recruit student volunteers to help at vaccination sites as well. This new **Student Volunteer Program** will give college students an opportunity to serve as greeters, ambulatory assistants, observers, or other roles to keep the vaccination process running smoothly at sites across the state. A special [registration page](#) has been set up for students to sign up to volunteer with over 598 people registering so far.

**CARING FOR THE
COMMUNITY**



**USM STUDENTS
TO SERVE AS
VACCINATION
SITE VOLUNTEERS**



HOSPITAL PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM



The **Hospital Preparedness Program (HPP)**, overseen by OP&R, had another busy quarter as they continue to support and enhance the ability of hospitals and health care systems to provide effective care and save lives during emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are some highlights:

- **COVID-19 Interim After-Action Report (AAR) Update:** The HPP Team is working to produce COVID-19 Interim AAR for Maryland (Feb 2020 to Feb 2021) and an Interim AAR for **HHS Region III** partners (Feb 2020 to July 2020). These interim reports will be used to meet deliverable requirements for both HPP and **Public Health Emergency Preparedness (PHEP)** grants.
- **MDH EVD/EID No-Notice Drills (NND) Update:** The 2019 NND AAR is now complete. The 2020 No-Notice Drill After Action Meeting will take place during the **Integrated Public Health and Medical Forum** (Date TBA).
- The **Maryland National Capital Homecare Association (MNCHA)** has been planning a three-pronged education and outreach initiative to reach their home caregivers who are hesitant to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.
- The **Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS)** hosted mental health trainings for its providers.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** was provided to hospitals and other healthcare facilities throughout the state.

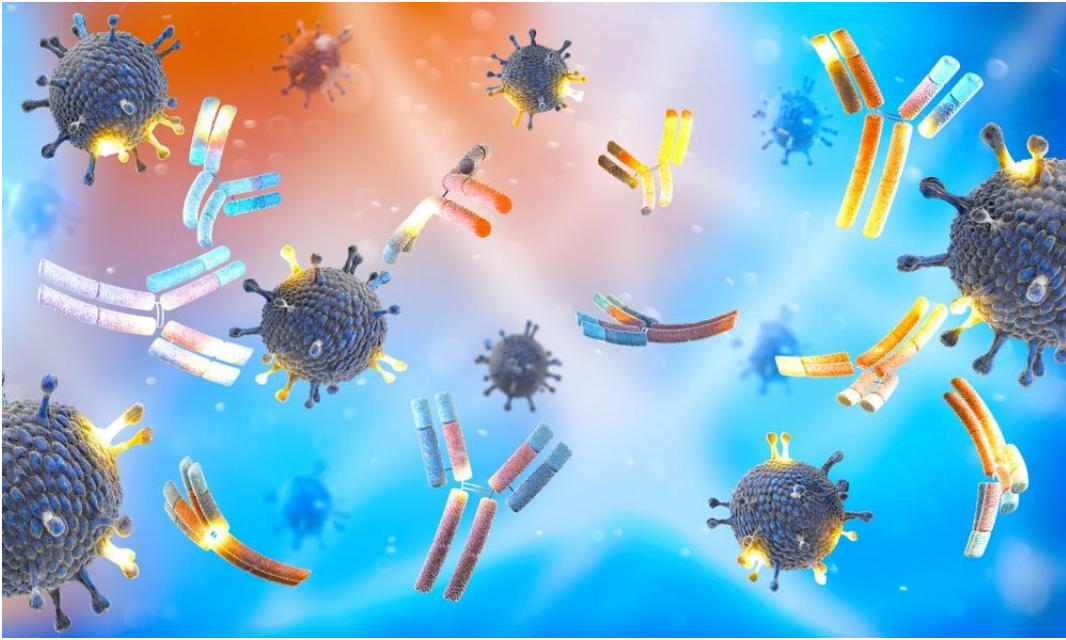


MarylandResponds/OPR ✓ @MarylandOPR · Jan 5

Thanks to our partners @umbaltimore & @umboem for the pic of their COVID vaccination site. The Sharps containers from @mdhealthdept not utilized for opioid response are an essential resource to vaccinate healthcare providers so they can eventually vaccinate their communities.



MONOCLONAL ANTIBODIES TREATMENT PROGRAM



Since November of last year, OP&R has been part of a dedicated team of doctors, communications specialists and other MDH staff developing and implementing Maryland's **monoclonal antibodies (mAb) treatment program**. This exciting and promising treatment is now an option for qualified individuals who test positive for COVID-19, are symptomatic and at high risk for severe disease. So far, over 5,000 mAb infusions have been given in Maryland, helping to prevent over 242 hospitalizations and approximately 100 deaths. OP&R is proud to be a part of the mAb team as it continues to grow and protect COVID-19 patients across the state.

With the help of OP&R and others in MDH's Communications Department, the mAb treatment program was featured in many media stories on TV, radio and print. Check out a couple of the reports below:

WMAR-TV:

[Ever heard of Monoclonal Antibody Treatment? Here's what you need to know](#)

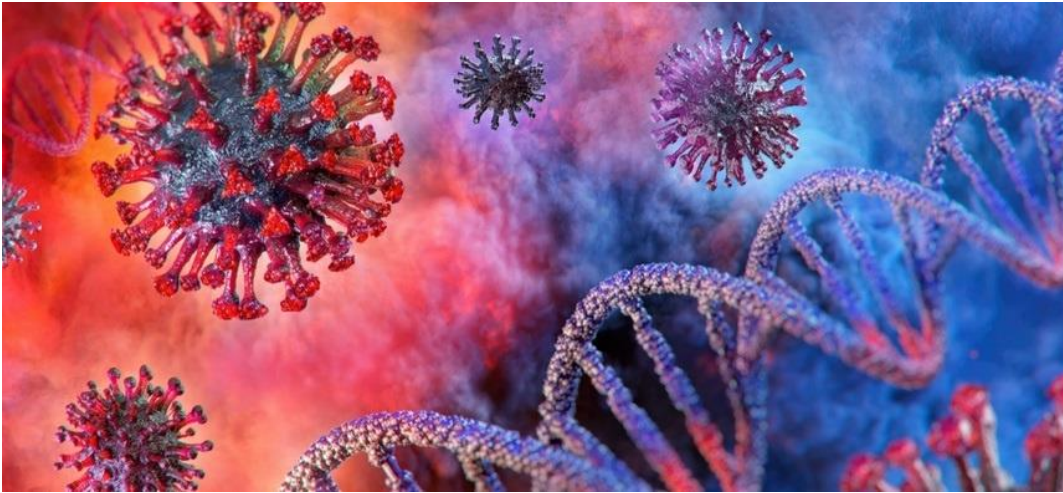
[continue »](#)

WTOP RADIO:

[Md. offers COVID-19 antibody treatment to high-risk patients with mild symptoms](#)

[continue »](#)

MD ESSENCE – BIOSURVEILLANCE



The OP&R **Biosurveillance Team** continues to use **ESSENCE (Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-Based Epidemics)** for surveillance of conditions of interest such as [cold-related illnesses](#) and COVID-19 like illness to produce weekly summary reports for our healthcare partners. The team is also in the process of planning ESSENCE training sessions for 2021. These will take place virtually and an email will be sent out with registration information once the dates are set.

In the past quarter, the team also worked with the CDC to raise awareness about the impact of COVID-19 on non-fatal overdoses, publishing the first publicly available Maryland data on suspected non-fatal drug overdoses during the COVID-19 pandemic to the CDC website. You can review this public report [here](#).

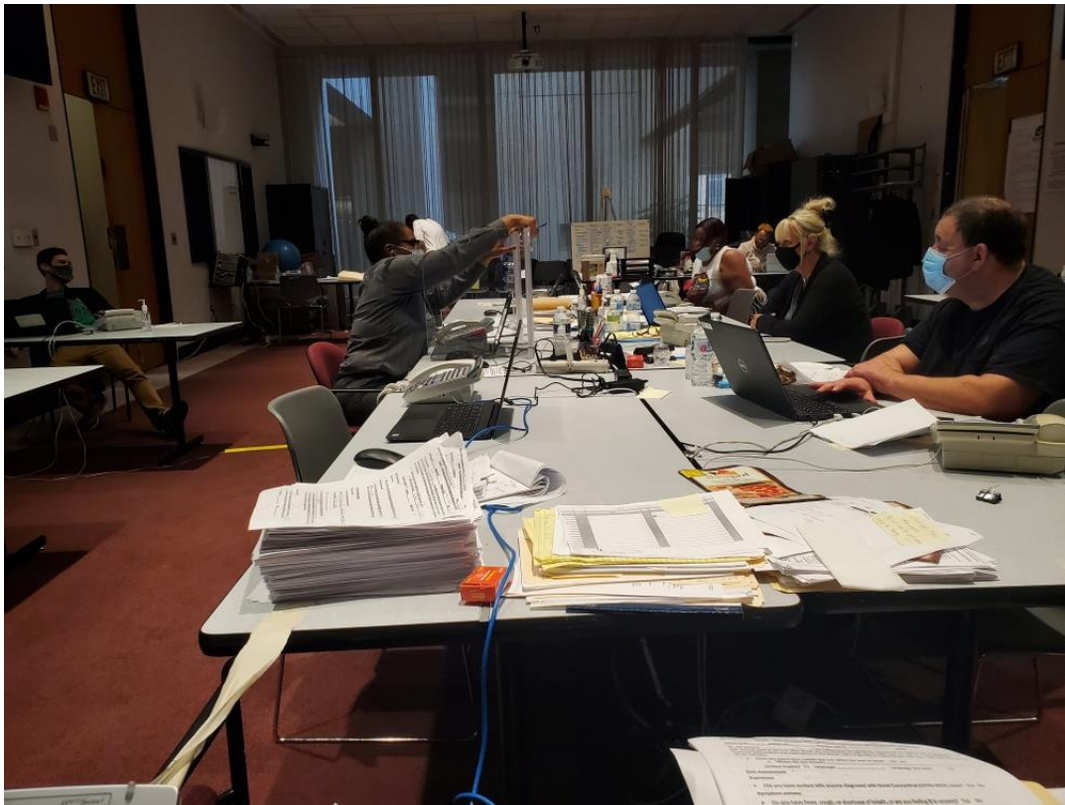
OP&R WAREHOUSE TEAM



The team at the **OP&R Warehouse** had an extremely busy first quarter as they continued to deliver PPE and other necessary supplies to COVID-19 vaccination sites across the state. They also began delivery of testing kits to participating school systems. This is an important part of making sure that students, teachers and staff are safe as they continue to head back into schools this spring. The warehouse also welcomed a new team member, **Robert Glenn**, who started in February. Welcome to the OP&R family Robert!

Since the start of OP&R's COVID-19 response over a year ago, millions of pieces of PPE, thousands of ventilators, and countless other equipment and supplies have passed through OP&R's various warehouses. These items ended up going to hospitals, local health departments, mass vaccination sites, faith-based organizations, law enforcement agencies and many more locations across Maryland. This amazing feat is a true testament to the power of partnerships, as we all continue to work together to put an end to this pandemic.

MDH COVID-19 CALL CENTER



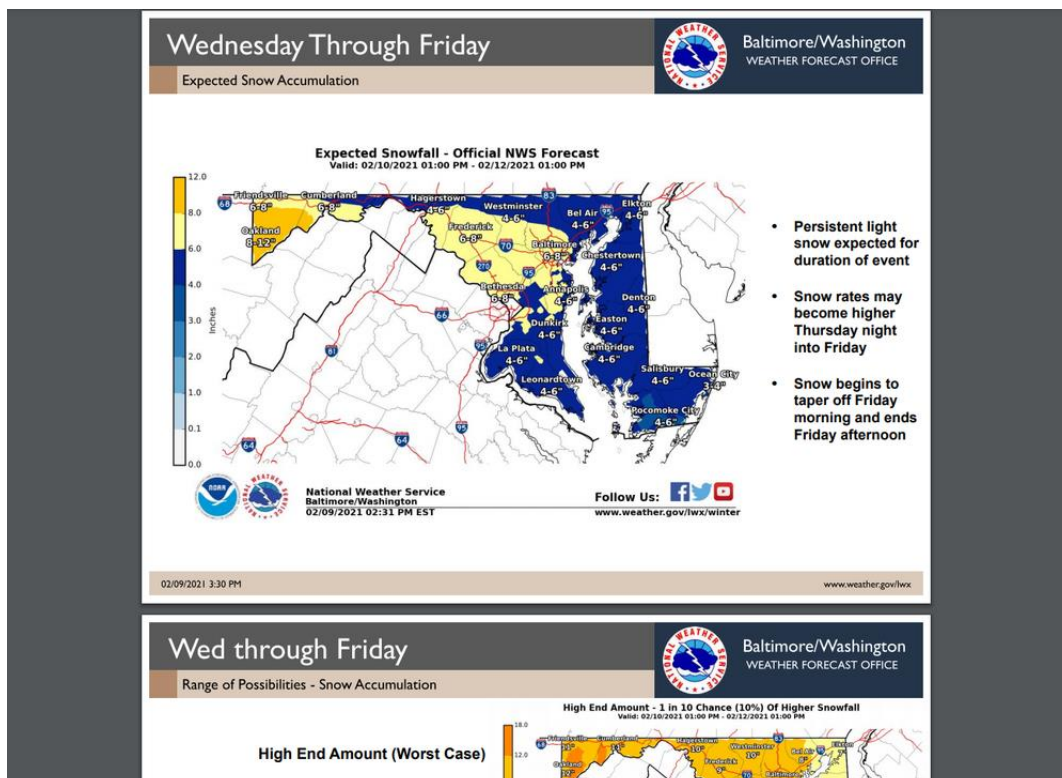
OP&R's **MDH COVID-19 Call Center** also hit a milestone this quarter as they reached the one-year anniversary of their first day of coming online on March 12, 2020. The original Call Center is located at 201 West Preston Street in downtown Baltimore (pictured above). A second location was added in September 2020 at our Hanover offices (below).

During the past year, they have received over 150,000 calls and have delivered over 25,000 COVID-19 test results. They also processed over 7,000 reports where they called travelers who had gone out of state or the country to see how they were feeling.

Thanks to all of the dedicated Call Center staff for the hard work and long hours that you've put in over the past year. You are an important part of the many behind-the-scenes unsung heroes here at OP&R that have contributed greatly during this COVID-19 response.



STATEWIDE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT TEAM



This winter, OP&R was part of the **Statewide Emergency Management (SWEM) Team** that monitored any winter weather events that had the potential to impact Maryland. The group also included the **MD Emergency Management Agency (MEMA)**, **MD Department of Transportation (MDOT)**, local emergency managers and the **National Weather Service** offices in Sterling, VA, Wakefield, VA, and Mt. Holly, NJ. Daily briefings were held leading up to and during weather events as the team monitored the storm and made plans for any resources that may be needed.



OP&R's very own Deputy Director **Veronica Black** even made a special guest appearance on **WJZ-TV** during a news story on winter weather preparedness. Check out the report [here](#). Nice mask Veronica!

INTEGRATED PUBLIC HEALTH & MEDICAL PREPAREDNESS FORUM

Disaster Medicine Characteristics

- What is it that makes disaster medicine different?
- What are the unique characteristics?

Open Discussion – What are your thoughts?
(no more than 5 minutes)

ASPR Saving Lives. Protecting Americans. 3

A screenshot of a Zoom meeting interface. It shows a grid of participants. The top row has a video feed of a man with a beard and glasses. Below it are icons for participants: CC, TK, TJ, and BE. The bottom row has a blue icon with a white arrow pointing right.

On the fourth Monday of every month, O&R hosts the **Integrated Public Health & Medical Preparedness Forum**, a virtual presentation with a guest speaker who gives a presentation on various topics of interest to our partners throughout the state. Past topics have included the MD COVID-19 Vaccination Plan, COVID-19 Therapeutic Treatments, Disaster Preparedness and information on insurance from the **MD Insurance Administration**.

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OP&R welcomed several new partners whose operations are based out of our Hanover offices. Members of the **Maryland National Guard** have been deployed onsite to help with the planning and logistics of the Maryland COVID-19 Vaccination Plan. This includes providing on-site assistance at the state's various mass vaccination sites. The National Guard is also involved with the **Vaccine Equity Taskforce** to make sure every Marylander is given an equal opportunity to be vaccinated, especially those in underserved, vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations.



OP&R also welcomed **Wynne Kwan** (left) from **FEMA Region 3** and **Commander Antoinette Percy-Laurry** from the **U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps**. Wynne is assisting with vaccine distribution planning and coordination as well as providing technical assistance for information sharing between MDH and the **FEMA Incident Management Assistance Team**. Commander Percy-Laurry is also assisting with vaccination distribution efforts and serves in the role of Liaison Officer for the **Department of Health & Human Services** and the state.

Thanks again to all of the dedicated OP&R staff and our great partners around the state of Maryland that have worked with us since this response began over one year ago. It hasn't been easy, but you have shown that through partnerships and teamwork, we can overcome any obstacle. We truly appreciate all that you do to keep Marylanders safe and healthy all year long!

Be sure to follow us on social media by clicking on the icons below and check out both of our websites as well:

[OP&R](#)
[MD Responds](#)



MarylandResponds/OPR  @MarylandOPR · Mar 12

...

After some of the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted today at 5pm, can I stop wearing my mask?



 8

 124

 328



MarylandResponds/OPR  @MarylandOPR · Mar 12

...

And be sure to continue proper social distancing as well.
[#MasksOnMaryland](#) [#WearTheDamnMask](#)